

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Chapter 6

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- *S6.01.** The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- *S6.02.** To participate in God's mission, this Synod as a part of the Church shall:
- a. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scriptures, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
 - c. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.
 - d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the Sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
 - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
 - f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- *S6.03.** To fulfill these purposes, this Synod, in partnership with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in the territory of this Synod. In fulfillment of this role, this Synod shall:
- a. Provide for the pastoral care of congregations, ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers of this church in this Synod, including:
 - 1) approving candidates for the ordained ministry in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synodical committees;
 - 2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining on behalf of this church;
 - 3) approving associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers of this church, which may be done through multi-synodical committees;
 - 4) authorizing the commissioning of associates in ministry, the consecration of deaconesses, and the consecration of diaconal ministers of this church; and
- *S6.03.a.**

- 5) **consulting in the calling process for ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers.**
- BLS6.03.a.
- 5) The Candidacy Committee shall examine the qualifications of candidates for ordination, for reception from other Lutheran church bodies, for commissioning as associates in ministry, and for consecration as deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or diaconal ministers, and shall present recommendations concerning applicants approved by the Committee to the Synod Assembly, or in exceptional circumstances to the Synod Council, for final action.
- b. Provide for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:**
 - 1) **nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;**
 - 2) **seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;**
 - 3) **making provision for pastoral care, call or appointment review, and guidance;**
 - 4) **encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and**
 - 5) **supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.**
 - c. Provide for discipline of congregations, ordained ministers, and persons on the official lay rosters; as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with the procedures established by this church in Chapter 20 of the ELCA Constitution and Bylaws.**
 - d. Foster organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities.**
 - e. Plan for the mission of this church in this Synod, initiating and developing policy and implementing programs, consistent with churchwide policy, including:**
 - 1) **ecumenical guidance and encouragement;**
 - 2) **development of new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries, and support and assistance in the conclusion, if necessary, of a particular ministry;**
 - 3) **leadership and encouragement of congregations in their evangelism efforts;**
 - 4) **development of relationships to and participation in planning for the mission of social ministry organizations and ministries;**
 - 5) **encouragement of financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;**
 - 6) **provision for resources for congregational life;**
 - 7) **assistance to the members of its congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world; and**
 - 8) **interpretation of social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit which assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues through (a) Synod Assembly memorials to the Churchwide Assembly or (b) resolutions for referral from the Synod Assembly through the Synod Council to the Church Council and (c) Synod Council resolutions addressed to the Church Council or**

for referral to a unit of the churchwide organization through the Church Council's Executive Committee.

- f. **Promote interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and enter into partnership with other synods in the Region.**
 - g. **Participate in churchwide programs and develop support for the ministry of the churchwide organization.**
 - h. **Foster the grouping of congregations in conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes.**
 - i. **Support relationships with and provide partnership funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries.**
- BLS6.03. i. Muhlenberg College shall nominate to the Synod Council persons for positions on its Board of Directors. The Synod Council shall elect the requisite number from such nominees as directors.
- *S6.03. j. **Foster relationships with and provide partnership funding on behalf of social ministry organizations.**
 - k. **Maintain relationships with and provide partnership funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers.**
- BLS6.03. k. The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia shall propose at least one nominee to the Synod Nominating Committee for each position to be filled on the seminary's governing board. The Nominating Committee shall present nominees to the Synod Assembly for election to the seminary board.
- *S6.03. l. **Foster supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries.**
- BLS6.03. l. The Eastern Pennsylvania Lutheran Camp Corporation shall propose to the Synod Nominating Committee nominees for positions on the camp's Board of Directors. Election shall be by the Synod Council.
- *S6.03. m. **Foster supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of this Synod.**
 - n. **Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public.**
 - o. **Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.**
 - p. **Provide for archives in conjunction with other synods.**
 - q. **Cooperate with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting Regions to carry out those functions of this Synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.**
 - r. **Elect members of the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with Bylaw 12.41.11. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and according to procedures specified in the bylaws of this constitution.**
- *S6.04. **Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60% of the members of the Synod Assemblies, Councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; and that, as nearly as possible, 50% of the lay members of Assemblies, Councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be female and 50% shall be male; and that, where possible, the representation of ordained ministers shall be both male and female. This Synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10% of its Assemblies, Councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.**

***S6.05. Each Assembly, Council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body of this Synod or any synodical units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such Assembly, Council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such Assembly, Council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body.**